The
Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

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All Contributions should be forwarded to the Editor, Ardeevin, Cadogan Park, Belfast, not later than the 16th.

A Foreword.

As will be seen from the announcement elsewhere it is our intention to start the New Year with a Missionary Number of the Magazine.

Circumstances over which we had no control have given great prominence to our religious position and compelled us to give a reason of the faith that is in us. Since we were attacked and misrepresented it seemed our bounden duty to declare what we really believed, not in any spirit of antagonism to other churches or believers, but in a positive manner. Our policy has more than justified itself. There has been a striking manifestation of interest in our views, and many persons who previously had never entered one of our churches have attended again and again. Further, the distribution of our literature has enabled us to reach a still larger audience, so that the ground has been prepared for a wider and yet more fruitful culture. In the hope of reaping where so much good sowing has been done we can well begin a New Year with cheerful and earnest endeavour.

Let us feel that this is an opportunity not for a few, or for a part of our constituency, but for our cause generally in the North of Ireland. Both city and country alike should take advantage of the favourable conditions. The Ulster Unitarian Christian Association is undertaking week-night lectures this month in Newry. Already we hear of the local interest aroused. It is possible that other centres might consider such lectures would be of help at the present time. We can confidently assert that the Association will be prepared to receive and respond to applications very sympathetically. The Laymen's League is also thoroughly alive to the needs and opportunities of the hour. As an earnest of their intention to make good we can point to the United Service arranged for the Ulster Hall on Sunday evening, December 10th. Every endeavour should be made to ensure the complete success of this Service. Char-a-banc parties can be arranged in most country centres and every such party will help to create a crowded congregation with all its inspiring effects. As an evidence of what we hope and resolve to do later, success in Belfast will be a splendid object lesson.

For our own part we believe that we have an unprecedented opportunity. To utilise it to the uttermost will be a splendid thing for our churches. But it will be much more than that. It will indicate that our faith is alive and alert, ready to make itself a greater influence in the world at large. If through any fault of our own the opportunity is neglected or only half-heartedly used, we shall never receive or deserve another so good. Let us grasp it with both hands.

Notes of the Month.

The January issue will be a Missionary Number, embodying our hopes and rallying our forces for good work in the New Year. All our congregations should at once increase their monthly order and urge their members to ensure the effective circulation of extra copies in each district. If every present subscriber would undertake to purchase and dispose of two additional copies that would mean very much for a forward movement. We need hardly say that what we wish can be done quite effectively without antagonism to other churches or congregations. If we assume, as we well may, that most persons are fair-minded and susceptible to good impressions, we can state our position quite adequately without impairing the great desideratum—the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Controversy, as commonly understood, does little good to the cause of truth and only brings religion itself into disrepute. We may avoid that while we put our case persuasively and dispassionately.

* * * *

Now that so many persons have been brought to consider Unitarianism, not as some strange product of perverted ingenuity, but as a reasonable and reverent faith, there is no reason why they and we should not be encouraged. Apart from any special effort, now or later, let us recognise that we have a well-equipped distributing centre in the Depository, Rosemary Street. It should more and more be encouraged to do active work in informing the minds and stimulating the efforts of Missionary workers. It has often been said in criticism, that we are not a missionary body. So much the worse for the body and for its boasted freedom and faith. Simply to receive a previous legacy from the past, to accept it without a corresponding desire to share it, is surely to prove ourselves unworthy of the gift. If we have a good thing, and it is our constant claim that we have, by all means let us pass on so that outsiders may recognise its value and participate in its power.

* * * *

We cannot forget that this month we shall join in the celebration of that Festival of Christmas which means so much to the Christian World at large. The message of Peace and Good-Will is one that all need and all should gratefully receive and proclaim. This closing year has had many things inimical to the cause of peace. There have been wars and rumours of wars. All the more earnestly should we strengthen the forces that make peace possible. At the present time the Lausanne Conference is considering important issues on which depend the alternatives of peace or war, if not in the immediate present, certainly in the not distant future. May statesmanship prove equal to its great task and ensure the peaceful persuasion of benevolent and harmonizing principles. Let us each and all cherish in no half-hearted way the glad and ever-welcome song of the angels: "Peace on Earth and Good-Will towards men."

* * * *

Many of our readers noted with heartfelt regret the recent death of the Rev. Matthew Robert Scott. He had on various occasions demonstrated his great preaching powers in Irish pulpits and no one was assured of larger and more appreciative congregations. At his best, when his physical powers were unimpaired, he was a most impressive and powerful preacher, and it was a great calamity when failing health withdrew him from the work he loved so well and did so effectively. We can only express our profound regret that he was not spared to our body for further work.

We would ask our Readers to support our Advertisers, and to mention this Magazine when obtaining articles.

Young People's Page.

Round the Christmas Fire.

There are many things that we associate with Christmas—Christmas boxes, Christmas trees, Christmas fare and the "Yule Log."—The good Christmas fire when the family—(perhaps scattered throughout the rest of the year)—gather round the hearth and tell stories—ghost stories used to be the proper thing—and ask each other riddles and puzzles. Here are some for you to find out and ask some of your friends.

(1) A gentleman wanting to test the intelligence of the village idiot asked him "What day of the week is this, my good fellow?" The answer was—"When the day after to-morrow is yesterday, to-day will be as far from Sunday as to-day was from Sunday when the day before yesterday was to-morrow." Can you say what day of the week it was? Here is a very old puzzle written by an Abbot of Canterbury who lived from 735 to 804 A.D.—

(2). If 100 bushels of corn were distributed among 100 people in such a manner that each man received 3 bushels, each woman 2, and each child half a bushel, how many men, women and children were there, there being five times as many women as men? Very few people will be found to give the correct answers to the following—of course the answer must be given without looking at the coins—

(3). What is the greatest number of three-penny-pieces that may be laid flat on the surface of a half-crown, so that no piece lies on another or overlaps the surface of the half-crown? Here is another—

(4). What is the largest sum of money—all in current silver coins and no four shilling piece—that I could have in my pocket without being able to give change for a half-sovereign?

(5). A cyclist bought a bicycle for £15 and gave in payment a cheque for £25. The seller went to a neighbouring shop keeper and got him to change the cheque for him, and the cyclist having received his £10 change, rode off. The cheque proved to be valueless, and the salesman was requested by his neighbour to refund the amount he had received, and to do this he had to borrow the £25 from a friend, as the cyclist forget to leave his address, and could not be found. Now, as the bicycle cost the salesman £11, how much money did he lose altogether?

(6). Can you explain this "Paradoxical Epitaph?"—

Here lie
Two grand mothers with their two grand-daughters;
Two husbands, with their two wives;
Two fathers, with their two daughters;
Two mothers, with their two sons;
Two maidens, with their two mothers;
Two sisters, with their two brothers;
Yet only six in all lie buried here, all born legitimate.

And now here are a few riddles—

(7). Behead a beast, and you will find
A larger beast is left behind.
Oh! this is wonderful you'll say—
A greater wonder I display;
Behead this larger beast, and then,
Instead of one, you'll find I'm ten.

(8). Why is the House of Commons like the influenza?

(9). What English word contains three vowels and three syllables, but only four letters?

(10). My **first** denotes a company.
My **second** shuns a company.
My **third** calls a company.
My **whole** amuses a company.

(11). Three letters three wives proclaim,
Three letters an ode give to fame,
Three letters an attribute name,
Three letters a compliment claim.

(12.) First find out a **word** that doth **silence** proclaim, spelt backwards or forwards is always the same;
And then you must think of a feminine **name**,
Spelt backwards or forwards is always the same;

And next of a **writing** or parchment,
whose **name**,
Spelt backwards or forwards is always
the same ;
Then a fruit, rather rare, whose
botanical name,
Spelt backwards or forwards is always
the same ;
And a **term** that in converse with
ladies you name,
Spelt backwards or forwards is always
the same ;
The initials combined form a **title**
each dame,
When addressed upon paper, may
rightfully claim,
And spelt backwards or forwards are
always the same ;

(13). There is a well known word in the English language, the two first letters of which signify a male, the first three a female, the first four a great man, and the whole a great woman. What is it ?

(14). From 45 take 45 and let 45 remain. How is this done ?

[For answers see the January number.

Temperance Notes.

We were both amused and interested on reading in the "Inquirer" recently the attempted piece of strategy by the Rev. Herbert Barnes. He had heard that a certain gentleman had been distributing tracts outside his Church. He obtained a copy of the literature and after a little trouble discovered the name and address of the author. Accordingly he wrote a polite letter to him and respectfully requested 500 copies of the pamphlets in question saying he would see the same were distributed among the visitors to his own Church as they afforded splendid propaganda material for the Free Christian attitude.

The same principle applies to us. The literature pouring out from the Ulster Anti-Prohibition Council Headquarters (32 Waring Street, Belfast), supplies us with information truly helpful and encouraging to our cause. Temperance workers should take the trouble and become acquainted with the efforts of this Council, for the perusal of their effusions is an education. We here discover not only the very apparent weakness of their position, but also realize more than ever the strength of our own. We do not underestimate the intelligence of their forces, for they are able and (from personal knowledge we say it) many at least are sincere in their convictions. How eloquently do they tell of their love for the liberty of the individual ! Surely this is one of the first principles of our Non-Subscribing Church, and our Temperance work is for the end that the people may truly enjoy **more** personal liberty. What strikes us most about their arguments, though skilfully put, is their irrelevancy. They compare the Liquor Traffic with this, that and the other, where it is hard to see the comparison. We have neither space nor inclination to cite cases, or go into details. The irrelevancy chiefly consists in the ignoring the evil of the liquor traffic itself. Drink is a curse ; and the frequenters of the bar are the first (in confidence often) to tell you.

We have great sympathy with the difficulties that the Minister of Finance of the Northern Government has to contend with. No one can doubt his great desire for Temperance Reform. But the measure of reform that is really needed is one that would cost our province more than we could afford. Remember the 4½ millions of revenue from the trade. You may regret that this useful sum should come from such a source ; but the fact is there. It also appears our powers of taxation are controlled mainly by the Imperial Parliament. No doubt a way will be found out of the impasse, but in the meantime it behoves all true Temperance Reformers to study the subject in its height, depth, and breadth, and spare no pains to educate the people, more especially the rising generation. Children are more amenable to reason than adults, through not so able to reason. Then let us be honest with the young, keeping nothing back. It is a cause that must win, for the Great Spirit of Liberty, Truth and Love is behind and beneath it.

P. GODDING.

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MODERN CHURCHMEN AND UNITARIANS

By S. H. MELLONE, M.A., D.Sc.

In January in the present year (1922) the Rev. Henry D. A. Major, Editor of **The Modern Churchman**, contributed to **The Hibbert Journal** an article designed to elucidate the views of Modern Churchmen by discussing the difference between their position and hat of the Unitarians. This pamplet is a reprint, with a few omissions and additions, of an article by Dr. Mellone which appeared in the April number of **The Hibbert Journal** and offered some comments on Mr. Major's argument and an explanation of the Unitarian position. The Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association have authorised its publication by the Lindsey Press in the present form **for wide distribution.**

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History of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church.

We have pleasure in giving an abstract of a lecture delivered last month at Holywood by Dr. John Campbell.

The lecture commended the study of history as a study of the motives which led men in past times to act and of the results which those actions brought about. The early Catholic Church could have made the religion taught by Jesus the religion of the Christian. Instead of that it recognised that the ignorant and barbarous masses of the people would be more easily attracted by the miraculous than by Christ's actual teaching and it made Jesus the Christian Deity. It interwove Christianity with the pagan religions. It strove so much to maintain that Jesus was God that it neglected the commandments which He taught. As a result Christianity was unable to uplift the lives of men as it should have done. The feeling that there was something wrong in the teaching of the Church caused people to form opinions of their own which were not in agreement with what the Church taught. Those who made such a choice were "heretics" and were punished for their views on religion. Amongst these heretics were the Waldenses, who advocated chastity, sobriety, truthfulness and industry as very important for the Christian. When persecuted some of them settled in Ayrshire and gave our ancestors, who came from that country, an early bias towards the religion of Jesus. Some three hundred years later the spirit of the Waldenses reappeared in the religious movement which produced the Lollards of Kyle in Aryshire, who were also persecuted as heretics by the Catholic Church. Soon after Knox came forward as the great leader of the Protestant Reformation in Scotland and found ready sympathisers in the West of Scotland, where the Waldenses and Lollards had unconsciously prepared the ground for him. His "Old Scottish Confession" laid down the guiding principles that the Christian should chiefly concern himself with what "Christ Jesus Himself did and commanded to be done." The main idea of Luther in starting the Protestant Reformation had been to get men to lead better lives under the influence of the reformed religion than they had done under the guidance of the Catholic Church. Calvin rather spoiled the development of Luther's effort, because he imitated the Catholic Church by laying the greatest emphasis on belief in the doctrines which he set forth and thus obscured Christ's teaching as to character and behaviour. Like the earlier Catholic Church he followed the easier way of attracting the thoughtless masses. Probably that was the only way in which he could have organised the ignorant, superstitious and depraved people by whom he was surrounded. Knox, following Luther and Calvin, remained conscious of the supreme importance of "that which Christ Jesus Himself did and commanded to be done." The teaching of Knox was that under which our earliest Scottish ancestors were brought up. They remained true to it until about 1700 A.D., when some of them began to forget the Old Scottish Confession and yearn after the newer Westminister Confession. In 1725 a division of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland took place and those who rejected the newer Confession and stuck to the Old Confession were put out of the Synod of Ulster and formed into the Non-Subscribing Presbytery of Antrim, because they refused to "subscribe" i.e. sign their names to the newer Westminister Confession. For the next hundred years there were many who, from time to time, fell away from allegiance to the Westminister Confession, and, as a result, there was, for about a century, an almost continuous struggle between those who upheld the Westminister Confession and those who refused to accept some of the statements contained in it. This came to an end in 1829, when the

majority of the Irish Presbyterians agreed to adopt the Westminister Confession in full as a statement of their faith. A minority of seventeen ministers, with the support of their congregations, refused to be bound to believe all the statements in the Westminister Confession, and were cast out of the Synod of Ulster. They drew up a Remonstrance against their exclusion from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and claimed that the "Bible was the only rule of faith and duty" and that man-made creeds were "relics of Popery." On account of this Remonstrance they were known as "Remonstrants." In 1835 the Non-Subscribers of the Presbytery of Antrim, the "Remonstrants" and some others in Dublin and the South of Ireland united to form the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Association. In 1910 this Association and some Congregations, which had for a time become indedependent of the Association, were organised into the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, with the object of obtaining among the people a "common standard of righteousness and obedience to the commandments which Christ Himself has laid down."

It is thus evident that there has always existed within the ranks of "those who profess and call themselves Christians" two main bodies. The larger of these is represented by the Roman Catholic Church and the orthodox Protestant Churches which have made belief in the creeds or Confessions of Faith the first and most important duty of their adherents. The smaller, represented in Ulster by the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, has maintained that belief in the religion taught by Jesus is the most important thing for mankind and that the religion taught by Jesus must be placed far above the opinions of Paul or any of the apostles, of the decrees of ancient Church Councils, of Calvin or any more modern theologian. This Non-Subscribing belief in the completeness and supremacy of the religion of Jesus has come down to us through the Waldenses and Lollards of Ayrshire, through the Old Scottish Confession of John Knox, and through the Non-Subscribers of 1725 and the Remonstrants of 1829. We must hope and be steadfast and strive to get the unadulterated teaching of Jesus made the future religion of this world.

When Cooke delivered his second sermon in Armagh he must have parted completely with all liberalism in religion. He painted the character and doom of the inebriate and finished with the words "And to all eternity the gates of Heaven were closed against him." A gentleman in the audience in low but distinct terms ejaculated "As God willing the gates of Armagh shall be closed against you." He had attained a thorough going discipleship to Calvin—the man of the iron heart, unspeakably cruel and treacherous, vindictive and vain, a man whose God was the pattern of his own dark mird; an Eastern Despot surrounded by cringing devotees and flatterers. Calvin had expressed his determination to compass the death of Servitus seven years before the event and was as good as his word and having in the meantime denounced his unhappy lifetime to the Inquisition in France had him on his return captured and burnt at the stake. But just pass within ten minutes of the vitcim a man of genius and scholarship, a physician who made important discoveries in connection with the circulation of the blood; being led forth from the horribly filthy cell in which he was incarcarated, the theological monster intruded upon and grvated his cruel eyes on him and insulted his last moments (see Dr. Drummond's Life of Servites and Scott Porter's lectures on Calvin and Servites and latter to Dr. Killen. Cooke's progress to stark Calvinism in all probability was similar to that of his henchman, Dr. Stewart of Broughshane, a man of cold and imperturbable temperament, who on his own admission entertained grave doubts as to the leading

doctrines of "Orthodoxy" until within either two or three of the Strabane discussion; but having found complete salvation he took up a position second only to that of Cooke in the encounters with Arianism It is worth noting however that Calvinism is the Deology of Augesteni usually termed Saint, Bishop of Hippo in Africa, the son of a heathen father and christian mother. He was a man of licentious habits in early years, but he became a Christian and was baptized in company with his own illegitimate son. For weal or woe no man has exercised so much influence in determining the Deology of Christiandom Calvinism in his theology revised and put into logical form by Calvin (see Confession).

The great clerical Dimapne just raised the question of doctrinal distinctions at a Synod held in Newry in 1822, and declared war against the Non-Subscribers and Arian brethren. For the moment however he found the Synod arouse to controversy. But with characteristic perseverance he set about creating a spirit of hostility to all the liberalism in the Synod and forming a party of his own. Accordingly he lectured through the greater part of Ulster especially to the less educated laity in Meeting Houses and other places on week days and Sundays, rousing them to furious fanaticism against what he called soul destroying heresy the leprosy of Arianism plucked the crown he said from the brows of the glorious Redeemer and which murdered the Bible, etc. He managed also to associate them with No Popery, opposition to Reform and to Catholic Emancipation, etc.

By acting on the laity and through them on the minister's story of theological and political strife, he gathered an immense party ready to uphold him under all circumstances. Belfast once turning from liberalism to toryism.

A graceful statue to the memory of Lord Belfast, a young workman possessed of some poetic genius, was removed from its position in front of the R. A. I. and hidden away in some building and the statue of the demagogue placed in front of the Institution he had striven his best to destroy. He was voted a public funeral by the Town Authorities. On the morning thereof Scott Porter said to his student that he had much misgiving as to the property of Allendy, for no man had done more harm in the North than Cooke by formerly in years and political strife and enmity,

When reminded of his former association with Arians at Communion and otherwise he declared unblushingly that only the Blood of Jesus and Holy Spirit could pass by him and atone for such disloyality to the Saviour.

J. C.

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Laymen's League.

The monthly meeting of the Belfast Chapter of the Laymen's League was held in the Central Hall, Rosemary Street, Belfast, on November 15th, 1922, at 8 'clock p.m. Mr. E. R. Jackson presided over one of the most representative and enthusiastic meetings yet held.

Mr. M'Cully gave an account of his work in distributing Unitarian Literature to those people attending the meetings of the Rev. W. P. Nicholson, and reference made to the attack he suffered at the hands of some of that gentleman's "lambs" after one of his meetings. The Secretary got a full account of the occurance inserted in the "Belfast Telegraph" of October 27, 1922, and obtained Police protection for the work to be continued.

It was unanimously decided to place on record in the minutes, the League's sincere appreciation of Mr. M'Cully's work, and three members undertook to assist him.

It was provisionally arranged to hold a joint service of all our Churches in the Ulster Hall, on Sunday, December 10th, at 7 p.m., and it is intended that by the time this appears in print definite arrangements will have been made, for particulars of which watch the daily papers.

It was decided to hold a Whist Drive on Wednesday, November 29th, at 7-45 p.m., in the Central Hall, four prizes being promised by the members, tickets 2/- each.

Gratification was expressed on account of the way in which some of our ministers had endeavoured to put before the public the principles of our belief, and pleasure was evinced that the positive point of view had been expounded instead of the negative, as it was strongly felt that this latter method had done us harm in the past.

The Secretary read a letter from the Rev. G. J. Slipper, pointing out that it was intended that lectures be delivered by the Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A, B.D., at Moira, and as definite information had been received from the Rev. M. Watkins that the dates had been fixed and were December 7th, 14th and 21st, 15 of the members promised to attend the first lecture and as many as possible all the three. The train arrangements are—Belfast, Great Northern Railway (1) depart, 6-45 p.m., Moira depart 9-37 p.m.; Belfast, Great Northern Railway (1) 10-5 p.m. Information as to tickets can be obtained from the following gentlemen

Mr. R. M'Crum, Rosemary St. Church
Mr. J. Henderson, All Souls' Church.
Mr. E. R. Jackson, Mountpottinger Church, or
Mr. F. A. Robinson, Hon. Secretary, Anchor Lodge, Holywood, Co. Down.

A letter received from the Rev. J. D. Davies, Clerk, Antrim Presbytery, stated that an effort was being made to broaden the basis of Incidental Fund in order to pay the travelling expenses of Clergy and Laymen attending the meetings of the Presbytery. The amount required from each church in the Presbytery to enable this to be done is £2 10s. 0d. per annum, and this was considered by the meeting to be small enough.

In some cases our Ministers have to pay nearly 10/- per journey, and when it is taken into account that as many as ten Presbytery meetings, sometimes more, have been held in one year, it will be seen that the matter is one of some magnitude. The work of the Presbytery is of vital importance to the denomination as a whole and is supposed to be financed by the congregations of which it is comprised. Each Presbytery ought, according to the constitution of the N.S.P.C., to contain an equal number of Clergymen and Laymen, but if the former had shown as little interest in this form of church government as the latter it would long ago have been "a thing of the past."

It is urged that the necessary yearly grants be made by the congregations concerned, it being felt that is not fair to expect our Ministers to support the Presbytery out of their own pockets, that is of course the position at the moment.

Preachers and Piety.

By the Moderator.

Attractive preaching is comparatively rare. The sermons of the rank and file of those who stand up in the pulpit as teachers and exhorters in the name of Christ, are sometimss interesting and sometimes edifying, but they are seldom rousing. A habit of devout attention and earnest private meditation on the part of their hearers is usually requisite by way of supplementing any probable benefit to be derived from their ordinary discourse.

But every now and then we hear of a gifted preacher who for a while enjoys considerable temporary fame sometimes limited to a particular city or locality, sometimes extended far and wide. People flock to the places where he takes his stand. Not many come with the thirst of the hart for the water brooks : the majority come with the curiosity of pleasure seekers who are always desirious of seeing or hearing some new thing. Sometimes they receive a reward which they had not desired, or one much better than any they had expected. Sometimes the preacher is a really good and gifted man, one " in whom the spirit of God is." If that be so, a few, or more than a few, will be turned from their iniquities and at least begin to lead a godly life or a better life than before, because of his preaching. But to the majority of those who swell the multitude he is but " a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument ; " for they hear his words and do them not. But sometimes the man who draws the multitudes is neither particularly good nor particularly gifted. His power of attraction resides not in the manifest truth, or beauty, or other excellence of what he says, or even in the originality of it ; but rather in his audacity in saying it in the way that distinguishes him from other speakers, or in some other peculiarity of the man or of his manner. Such things please a vulgar audience, who do not inform their judgement of the man by reasonable tests ; especially if he add to the semblance of the more proper work of quickening desire for Christlike living an assault upon others who are making their endeavours after that same end at least as earnestly as he but on lines which he professes to deplore and takes upon himself to viciously denounce. The present writer one heard a popular preacher offering up a prayer for the extirpation of papists or of papistry in which his phrases were reinforced by the groans and ejaculations of his sympathetic fellow worshippers who made a show of piety by saying, " Oh do, Lord Jesus ! " Surely if their performance could have been reproduced for them by phonograph they would have winced at the prospective punishment of their hypocrisy ! It is a marvel to those who unostentatiously endeavour to fulfil the apostolic precept to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, to witness the complacence of those scores of persons of very ordinary character who pass themselves off among the crowd that flocks to one of these popular preachers as assuredly " converted " or " saved." Surely it would become them better to walk more humbly with their God, and rather, with a due sense of their short comings as compared with absolute perfection, to ask him still to have mercy upon them, sinners as they still remain ; and to ask themselves, of the man who has pleased their fancy by his message or his manner, is his ministry veritably from heaven or from men ? Could he truthfully say, so to carry conviction, " the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me ? "

Lesson Notes.

December 3rd. THE TRAVELS OF ST. PAUL.—The Last Voyage. IV. ii. The Shipwreck. Acts xxvii. 27-44. Key Text, Acts xxvii, 34a.

27-29). The Sea of Adria (not the Adriatic Sea) was the water between Sicily and the south of Italy

and Greece. They may have heard the sound of waves upon a distant shore. Their surmise was confirmed by sounding with the lead. They therefore anchored for fear of destruction in the dark. (31) The vessel was hard enough even for the sailors to handle in such a storm ; it would have much been more so for any others that would remain on board. (34) This was sensible counsel. If people have something formidable to encounter, they should take the precaution of fortifying themselves beforehand with all possible means. With food, if strength and endurance are needed ; with clothing, if cold and tempest are to be encountered ; with as much useful information as may be procured, if specific difficulties known to the experience of others are likely to arise. Paul reassures them for a second time as to their personal survival (see verse 22). (37) This number would not be larger than would be carried by many transport vessels of the day, but it would be unusually large for a freight ship ; hence some ancient Greek manuscripts state the number as 76 instead of 276. (38) It was probably a corn ship : thay had already begun to throw the freight overboard some ten days before (see verse 18). (40) The rudders were like two large oars, which, whilst the vessel was anchored over night, had been lashed up out of the water. (44) The land was that of the Island of Melita, now called Malta.

December 10*th. THE TRAVELS OF ST. PAUL.—The Last Voyage. IV. iii. From Melita to Rome. Acts xxviii.* 1-16. *Key Text, Ps. cxxxix.* 10.

(1,) The people of the Island of Melita (Malta) being of Phoenician stock did not speak Greek, which is the reason for calling them barbarians : there being much difference between the ancient and modern use of the word. (5, 6) The snake may have been one of a harmless species. (7) By " the chief man" is meant one in an official position. (8, 9) See II Cor. xii. 12 showing that Paul claimed the power of working wonders such as that attributed to him here. It is noteworthy that if '" Luke the Physician " was author of the book, and was among the company of those to whom reference is made in the use of the pronoun of the first person plural, not *he* but Paul was the one who healed the man. (11) The third ship, the second being likewise a ship of Alexandria (see xxvii. 2, 6). The twin brothers whose sign the ship bore, were Castor and Pollux, sons of the God Jupiter, who were supposed to be protectors of seamen. (12) Syracuse on the east coast of Sicily. (13) Rhegium, called now Reggio, at the " toe " of Italy. Puteoli on the north side of the Bay of Naples, then called the Bay of Puteoli. (14) " Brethren "—Christians resident in Italy. The writer appears oddly to have forgotten that Paul is a prisoner being conveyed to Rome by the Roman authorities. (15) These " brethren " (Christians resident in Rome) come to meet Paul. The Market of Appius was 43, and the place called " The Three Taverns," 33 miles from Rome. He was glad to be welcomed by fellow Christians and also glad to be nearing the city he had purposed long ago to visit, to which moveover he had addressed one of his epistles.

December 17*th. THE TRAVELS OF ST. PAUL.—The Last Voyage. IV. iv. At Rome. Acts xxviii.* 17*—end. Key Text, Acts xxviii,* 1831.

(17) These Jews are unconverted ones (not brethern of the Christian church like those in verse 14). They are the chief in the sense of being the most influential among the Jews in Rome. (19) Paul is particular to show that it is not his wish to bring a complaint against them, although his fellow Jews have brought a complaint against himself. (21, 22) They own to having heard of the Christian sect (see November 5th—verse 2) though apparently without having taken trouble to know much about it but they profess not to have heard about Paul himself, which is surprising considering his extensive travels and labours and the con

stant intercourse between Jews of Rome and of Jerusalem through pilgrimages made by those of the former to the latter City taking place every year. (25) They would appear to have followed up the address of Paul by an animated discussion. (26, 27) The words quoted are from Is. vi. 9, 10 (Septuagint version). The same are quoted in Mt. xiii, 14, 15. Writers in the New Testament appear to have been disposed towards unbelieving Jews as Jonah was towards the Nivevites ; he was displeased exceedingly and was angry when they repented at his preaching, and were not punished as he had predicted. (Jonah iii. 10, iv. 1). (28) See September, 17th verse—64.

December 24th. CHRISTMAS LESSON..—The Magnificat. Luke i. 39-56. Key Text, Luke ii. 32.

(Key Text) Cp and contrast with the reference to Jews and Gentiles in connection with the gospel in the Book of the Acts (e.g. xxviii. 28).

(Luke ii. 39-45) Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist—herald of the Messianic Kindgom, represented by the evangelists (more particularly so by the fourth) as a herald of Jesus the Messiah—is represented by Luke to have been a kinswoman of Mary the mother of Jesus. The Baptist made a very great impression among his countrymen, and the evangelist wishes to connect the ministry of Jesus with the ministry of John in the minds of his readers.

(46-55) This song (called from the first word of the Latin Version—the Magnificat) extols the mercy of God exhibited in the case of Mary. Lowly as she is by nature he has exalted her among women of all generations as the mother of the Messiah. Such is the way in which God always deals with the devout : it is not those who have made themselves strong and great, or that have been made so by others, that God glorifies, but the lowly and the pious. The song is plainly modeled upon the song of Hannah (1 Sam. ii. 1-10). There is no part in the one which has not a counterpart in the other. The song of Hannah (notwithstanding its last couplet) is not a Messianic composition, but refers merely to the monarch shortly to be instituted as a defence of Israel. (1 Sam. viii. verse 19, 20).

It is appropriate to reflect upon this song of Mary at Christmas, because it was composed by way of celebrating the birth of Christ. The glorification of Mary the mother of Jesus by the story of the Magnificat is a glorification of motherhood in general. It recognises the truth that the whole race constituted of individuals born into the world in helpless infancy is indebted to the devotion of mothers not alone for material nourishment and physical upbringing, but also for the beginning of moral and spiritual consciousness. Blessed among women are all good mothers, and blessed among mothers, the mothers of good men.

December 31st.—REVISION.

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Price 5 shijlings net ; postage 9d. Orders may be given to Mr. Eustace Gordon, 35 Rosemary Street, Belfast ; or to the author Rev. Eustace Thompson, Cairncastle, Co. Antrim.

Obituary.

Miss Isabella Orr, Ballylesson.

Only a month ago we had to record the loss of a member of our community and of the Orr family at Ballylesson. It is our mournful duty to make reference to the death of a second member of that household so soon after the decease of her sister, Miss Jane Orr. At the time of the latter's death her surviving and younger sister, Miss Isabella Orr, was in delicate health, and the decline in strength became still more marked. All that medical skill and careful nursing could do was unfortunately in vain, and the end came on November 21st. The third daughter of the late James Orr, M.D., of Ballylesson, the deceased lady was educated for the teaching profession and followed it successfully for years. But in her later life almost complete deafness made such work impossible and shut her out from social intercourse. She still retained great interest in young people and ever manifested sympathetic insight into their character. They quickly perceived that, and repaid her great kindness with ready response and complete confidence. But older persons also valued her kindly and amiable person. ality, and will miss her greatly. All will feel the greatest sympathy for Dr.Gawn Orr, the sole survivor of the greatly respected Ballylesson family.

The funeral took place on November 23rd., in the presence of many sorrowing friends. The service at the house was conducted by the Rev. J. A. Kelly and Rev. H. J. Rossington, these gentlemen being also responsible for the service at the graveside at Moneyrea.

Reports.

Unity Guild.—The monthly meeting of the Guild was held on Wednesday, November 8th, in the Mountpottinger school-room. being gentlemsn's night the entire arrangements were left to the Gentlemen members of the Guild, who are to be congratulated on the success of the meeting. An interesting and enjoyable miscellaneous programme was contributed by themselves. As is usual at the meetings Tea was served and the Gentlemen did this part of their work in an excellent manner, so well indeed that perhaps some of the married members will be given frequent opportunities at home of shewing how capable they are. Half an hour's dancing brought the meeting to a close.

N.B.—On Saturday, December 16th, in the Central Hall the Annual Soiree in the form of a Fancy Dress Dance and Whist Drive will be held. A prize will be given for the best Fancy Dress.

* * *

Ballyclare.——On Sunday, October 29th, Harvest Festival Services were held in the above church morning and evening. Both services were well attended, particularly the evening, when the church was crowded to its utmost capacity, and though seats were placed along both sides of the aisle the accomodation proved quite inadequate, numbers being obliged to turn away. The church was decorated with the usual harvest produce and looked exceedingly pretty. Special music was rendered by an augmented choir under the able leadership of Mr. E. Holmes of Larne who kindly acted as organist for the day. At the evening service the choir gave a beautiful rendering of the anthem "Ye shall dwell in the Land," the solo parts of which were taken by Mr. J. R. Davidson of Belfast and Mrs. Moore, A.L.C.M., of Doagh. Mrs. Moore also sang two solos that were listened to with delight. In the morning, "Nearer, My God, to Thee," and in the evening, "Thanksgiving." The services were conducted by the minister.

* * *

Comber Unitarian Church.—The Harvest Thanksgiving Services in connection with the above church were held on Sunday, 29th October. The church was tastefully decorated for the occasion by the ladies of the Congregation. The preacher was the Rev. H.

J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., who delivered appropriate sermons, which were greatly appreciated. There were record congregations at both services, seats having to be placed in aisles for the evening service, and every available space was occupied. The collection, which was on behalf of the Choir Fund, was also a record one. The Choir provided special music. which was rendered very effectively. The Young People's Society opened the Winter Session with a Social on Wednesday, November 8th. There was a fair attendance of members and visitors. The competition was won by Mrs. Watson and Mr. Jack Irwin, Miss Frame gave two excellent recitations and Rev. J. D. Davies sang two Songs. The music was provided by Miss Leslie of Larne. Mr. Gordon Watson and Misses M'Cartney and Speers. The evening concluded with the signing of the National Anthem.

* * *

Downpatrick.—The Harvest festival in First Downpatrick Presbyterian Church was well attended on Sunday, October 29th. In the morning it was chiefly the members of the church who formed the large congregation, but in the evening, by the happy and time-honoured custom, members of other denominations attended in large numbers, thus demonstrating the friendly interest which exists here among the church-going communities. It was quite evident that the Downpatrick residents did not share missioner Nicholson's opposition to the Unitarians. The church had been most tastefully decorated, chiefly by the skilled hands of the Misses E. and J. Jordan, energetically assisted by Misses A. Chambers, May and Kath leen Dickson. The new organ was in charge of Mr. G. W. C. Porte, of Belfast, and the sweet tone of the instrument was brought out in several selected voluntaries. The augmented choir led the music with feeling and zest, and the congregations gladly voiced their thanksgiving in the well-known harvest hymns. The preacher was Rev. A. Davison, of Dromore, whose thoughtful sermons were listened to with much interest.

* * *

Holywood.—Harvest Thanksgiving services were held on the last Sunday in October, followed by a musical service on the following Monday evening. The church was very beautifully adorned for the occasion, special music was rendered by an augmented choir and all the services were attended by unusually large congregations, especially on Sunday Evening when the building was packed, chairs and forms having to be placed in the aisles, while many were unable to gain admittance. The Sunday services were conducted by the Minister (Rev. Edgar Lockett). The address at the Monday evening services was given by the Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., of Belfast, and the choir sang a cantata, "Thank the Lord." Mr. M'Bratney (accompanist of the Belfast Philharmonic Society) presiding at the organ. The music and singing were much appreciated and credit is due to the organist (Mr. W. J. Harvey) the members of the choir, and friends from other churches who kindly helped them for their contributions to very successful services At a meeting of the church guild held on Tuedsay evening, November 7th. Dr. John Campbell (member of Senate of our Northern Parliament) favoured members with a paper on "the History and principles of our Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church. The chair was taken by Mr. W. H. Niall Nelson, and there was a good attendance. An abstract of Dr. Campbell's lecture appears on another page. It was a valuable contribution to a subject of vital importance to our group of congregations—a subject moreover concerning which there is more ignorance amongst our members than ought to exist. Many of our young people go out amongst the adherents of their churches without knowing sufficiently for self defence against criticism what their church stands for or the story of the fight for

freedom which their forefathers won for them. There are few amongst us who know the history of our religious movement in Ireland more thoroughly than Dr. Campbell, and members at Holywood appreciated the privilege of having him as their teacher. The speaker gave a survey of the development of the christian movement from its beginning in apostolic times. Devoting special attention of course to the history of christianity in Ireland. Irish Presbyterianism and its relation with Presbyterianism in Scotland, and the controversy between the old and the new lights in Ulster early in the last century which began the movement which culminated in 1907 in the constitution of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Dr. Campbell found the distinctive principle of our church in the fact that it was founded neither on the infallable authority of a heirarchy, nor of a Book , nor of a creed, but simply on the teaching of Jesus himself. In growing obedience to that teaching he saw the real solution of the grave problem of our modern life, other churches, as well as ours, he admitted, accepted the teaching of Jesus, but were not satisfied to regard Jesus teaching was by itself a sufficient rule of christian faith. They insisted for example on theories about Jesus. Speaking of Unitarianism Dr. Campbell pointed out that it meant something more than belief in one God. It was belief in the God of the teaching of Jesus. The paper was followed by a brief but very interesting discussion in which Miss M'Mester, the chairman, Mr. Wm. Patterson and Rev. E. Lockett took part on the motion of the Chairman the meeting accorded a very cordial vote of thanks to Dr. Campbell, and the hope was expressed that he would address the guild again on other aspects of the same subject.

A small sale of work, organised by the members of the sewing class, was held in the Schoolroom on Wednesday, November 22nd., with the object of raising money for the re-painting and re-decoration of the Church buildings, a good collection of saleable articles was attractively displayed on the stalls, and the sale was well attended during the afternoon and evening. The following is a list of the stall holders, &c. :—Needlework, etc., Mrs. J. Graham, Mrs. W. J. Harvey, Mrs. Jas. Shannon, jun., Mrs. T. K. Greenfield and Mrs. Lockett ; Provisions—Mrs. Maginnis, Mrs. W. Patterson, Miss M'Master and Miss M'Gill ; " White Elephants "—Mrs. Omar Nelson, Miss Nelson and Miss Malcolm ; Hardware—Mrs. M'Elvery, Mrs. Hugh Shannon, jun., and Mrs. M'Cormick ; Flowers—Fruit and Vegetables—Mrs. Robinson, Miss L. Patterson and Miss Clara Shannon ; Toys and Sweets—Mrs. W. K. Graham, Miss Betty Graham and Miss K. Harvey ; Refreshments—Mrs. Sharman D. Neill, Mrs. Gardiner, Mrs. Williamson, Misses Neill, M'Ervel, Gardiner and Pollock ; Silhouettes and Guessing Competitions—Mrs. Robert Grainger ; Hoopla—Messrs. Graham, Palmistry—Miss Trotter ; Parcels—Miss Douglas.

The sale was to have been opened by Mrs. Eustace Thompson, of Cairncastle, the wife of the Moderator of our church unfortunately however Mrs. Thompson was unavoidably prevented from arriving in time for the opening ceremony and in her absence the sale was declared open, in a few happy words by Miss M'Mestor, the bearer of a name of honoured memory in Holywood. In the evening a musical programme arranged by Miss Munster, made a pleasant interlude in the sale. An instrumental trio was played by Mrs. Boas (piano), Miss Madge Boas (violin) and Miss Gardiner (cello)., and a violin solo by Miss Boas. Songs were sung by Mrs. Robin, Mrs. M'Kelvey, Miss Linda Brown and Mr. James Shannon, jun., and a recitation was given by Miss Florrie Clugstone. The concert was much appreciated.

During the afternoon the proceedings were enlisted by a gramaphone kindly lent by Mr. Edens Osborne and manipulated by Mr. C. Greenfield. The financial result of the effort was

very satisfactory, £135 being cleared. The members of the Sewing Class under Mrs. John Graham and all who so willingly helped them are to be heartily congratulated on the success they achieved.

* * *

Larne.—Harvest thanksgiving services were held in the Old Meeting House on Sunday, 12th Nov. as well as a liturgical service in loving memory of the young men of the congregation who fell in the Great War. As in former years decorations were confined to offerings of fruit, flowers, etc., placed on the Communion Table, with bunches of grain attached to the panels of the pulpit and choir stairs Flowers and autumn leaves were interwoven with the railings on either side of the pulpit, all being arranged by the Misses Moore, Bailie, M'Kee and Drummond. In the vestibule, in addition to grain and flowers, the monument to the soldiers and sailors was adorned with a chaplet of laurels, surmounting the emblem of the Christian Faith, beautifully done in wheat ears and rosemary by the Misses Greenfield. The morning service was conducted by the pastor loci, a large congregation being present. The Rev. Mr. Lockett, of Holywood, who had been officiating at Cairncastle, kindly relieved the minister of evening duty. Mr. Lockett gave a most excellent sermon, and highly justified himself as worthy successor to the late beloved "Father," the Rev. C. J. M'Alester. Mr. Holmes presided at the matchless Crawford organ with his accustomed grace and ability, and led his choir, who sang the usual harvest hymns, with much spirit and fervour, and also rendered the anthem for the occasion with much devotion and feeling.

* * *

Mountpottinger.—Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held on October 22nd, being conducted by the resident Minister. Favoured with a fine day there were good congregations and the church itself looked better than at any time during recent years, the scheme of decorations being suitably carried out by the Minister and a willing band of lady helpers. Thinking it advisable to bring our position as a body before the community as a whole Mr. Watkins has been during November delivering a course of three special evening sermons on "Unitarian Teachings." They dealt with the following subjects:—(1). "God." (2). "Jesus Christ." (3). "The Atonement." The half yearly Communion Services was held on Sunday, November 5th, when there was a good congregation, the most gratifying feature of it being the attendance of several of our young people who were Communicants for the first time, and were accordingly welcomed into fellowship by the Minister. Social activities have again commenced with the winter months, and the Congregational Socials held monthly which proved so successful last winter are being repeated this season. The opening night, October 27th, was in the hands of Rev. M. and Mrs. Watkins, when a goodly number attended, and a pleasant evening was spent. Being desirous of recognising the voluntary work of the Choir and the great advancement made under the leadership of Mr. H. Shepherd, the ladies of the Sewing circle entertained member of the choir and friends to a party in the Schoolroom on November 1st, when a most enjoyable evening was spent in playing games, competitions and the rendering of musical items, and also discussing the good fare provided.

* * *

Newry.—The Harvest Thanksgiving services were held on Sunday, 22nd October, with the Rev. W. H. Townley Tilson, M.A., as special preacher.

The church was beautifully decorated by several ladies of the Congregation, including the Misses Warnock, Mrs. Slipper, Mrs. Henning, Misses E. and A. Mitchell, J. M'Combe C. Wharton, M. Berry, M. Rainey, assisted by Messrs. M'Caigne, Thompson, and Warnock.

A fine collection of Harvest products and fruits was sent by members and also other friends from neighbouring churches, and special music, always a feature at these services, was rendered by an augmented choir, under the direction of Mrs. Slipper who presided at the organ.

The Anthem " Ye shall dwell in the Land " (Stainer) was sung, the solo parts being taken by Mr. Flack and Miss Sterritt.

At the Sunday services, Miss Margery Still of Belfast, sang with great feeling the solo " Nearer my God to Thee," and her welcome help was much appreciated.

Mr. Tilson's sermons were very appropriate, and greatly enjoyed by the large congregations, which included members of other Newry Churches.

The Festival Service was continued on the following evening when the Rev. George J. Slipper, preacher. The attendance was satisfactory, and the collections, on behalf of the church funds, were generous.

* *

Raloo.—Harvest Services were held in the above church on Sunday, 22nd October. The church was decorated with the emblems of harvest, and was artistically arranged by the young people of the Sunday School. Both services were well attended, especially in the evening, when many had to stand in the hall of the church. The Rev. W. G. Marsden conducted the service in the morning. His discourse was interesting, and appropriate to the occasion, and was followed with close attention by those present. Rev. A. Whitford preached in the evening on " God crowning the year with his goodness," and was thoughtful, inspiring and full of Christian optimism, and was listened to throughout very attentively. The harvest hymns were well rendered by an augmented choir and much enjoyed. Miss B. Barnett presided at the organ. Miss Alexander added efficiency and delight to the services by her solo singing. In the morning she sang " The King of Love my Shepherd is," and in the evening " How beautiful are Thy dwellings." These were highly appreciated by the congregations. The committee desire to thank all those who so willingly helped to make the services a success, as we all feel they were.

BAPTISM.

On October 10th, 1922, by the Rev. J. Glynn Davies, Sarah Elizabeth, the infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Gordon Newell, of Hollow Farm, Magherascouse.

MARRIAGES.

GILLIE — M'CLELLAND. — On Tuesday, November 7th, 1922, in the First Presbyterian Church, Rosemary Street, Belfast, by the Rev. Alex. Osborne Ashworth, assisted by the Rev. Walter Nelson, M.A., Groomsport, David Samuel Hooke, son of Thomas James Gillie, of Kenmareville, Belfast, to Beatrice Helina Hilda Kathleen, daughter of James M'Celland of Marsden Villa, Belfast.

DEATHS.

ESDALE.—November 4th, 1922, at the residence of her son-in-law (Mr. David Ervine), 26 Grampian Avenue, Belfast, Elizabeth, widow of the late Ralph Esdale, Interred in Dundonald Cemetery 6th November, 1922, by the Rev. Alex Osborne Ashworth.

MAKEMSON.—On November 8th, 1922, at her residence, 35 Roe Street, Clifton Park, Belfast, Emma widow of the late Thomas Makemson. Interred in Dundonald Cemetry, on November 11th 1922, by the Rev. Alex. Osborne Ashworth.

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The essays in this volume deal only with a selection from many religiou ssubjects on which Unitarianism has a distinctive message. It is, however, hoped they will adequately demonstrate the fact that Unitarian thought is not unprogessive, and that they will have some effect on the constancy with which statements of faith made by Unitarians a century ago are quoted as representative of the modern message.

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